

loan or a grant—it will be years before you will see those funds. What are flood victims supposed to do in the meantime? They can't just simply sit on an empty lot and wait. Life goes on.

Hurricane Florence is just one in a long line of storms that have devastated Americans families. I am not just talking about massive hurricanes such as Katrina, Rita, and Sandy. Unnamed floods in the spring and summer of 2016 ravaged 56 of the 64 parishes or counties in my State. In parts of my State in 2016, we had folks who endured 20 inches of rain in 2 days. I don't care if you live on Pikes Peak. If you get 20 inches of rain in 2 days, you are going to flood, even if you are not near a body of water. That is just a fact.

In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria last year, I thought my colleagues might have seen the light and might have come to the table to discuss a long-term sustainable and reasonable bill to reform the NFIP, but, unfortunately, that couldn't be further from reality.

Congress has not only refused to debate comprehensive National Flood Insurance Program reform, but the program nearly lapsed. Congress has had well over a year to lay out a plan. Yet it still refuses to do so because one or two Members want to hold up progress. Unfortunately, it is ordinary people like the good people of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, and Texas who are feeling the pain of those politics.

Recovering from a natural disaster is more than just putting up drywall. It is about communities coming back safer, stronger, and better prepared. The NFIP is an indispensable part of that effort to rebuild, but a flood insurance program isn't useful if it is too complicated to understand or if it allows bad actors to take from hard-working families.

We need rules for the flood insurance program that make sense. We need government websites that a normal person can navigate. We need quicker decisions by bureaucrats, and a faster process to get disaster dollars to the people who need them. Most importantly, though, people need to be able to afford the flood insurance.

I understand the National Flood Insurance Program is running a deficit. As you can see, we have had an extraordinary number of storms, and I understand that it needs to be put back into sound, fiscal shape. But raising the price of the product so high so that people can't afford the insurance is not going to achieve that. It is going to undermine the entire purpose of the flood insurance program.

I suggest that what we have to do is to strike a balance between fiscal stability and longevity of the program and affordability for the people who are supposed to be served by it. We have no choice but to get the program fiscally stable, but also we have no choice but to get premiums under control, and reform is the only path forward. The status quo is not working.

When Congress established the NFIP, we made a promise. We promised 5 million Americans—that is how many policyholders we have—including half a million people in my State and 350,000 people in North and South Carolina, that we would be there to help should disaster strike, and it is high time that the Congress show people that we meant it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL RICE MONTH

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, September is National Rice Month. In Arkansas, this is certainly reason to celebrate. My home State has the proud distinction of being the Nation's leader in rice production, producing about half of the U.S. rice crop in America. Arkansas rice producers not only provide a safe, reliable food source that helps feed the world but also helps drive the State's economy.

Arkansas rice farmers support nearly 15,000 jobs and, on average, contribute \$2.3 billion to the State's economic output. Rice milling operations and forward market linkages in Arkansas account for more than \$3 billion in total output of goods and services.

These are impressive numbers for an integral component to Arkansas' economy and part of the reason why the industry was recognized by Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who signed the Rice Month proclamation in early September. As a leader in production, Arkansas rice farmers have a unique role in the industry and in the ongoing research to support its continued success in the State.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is a leading research entity on rice production. Its Rice Research and Extension Center is recognized worldwide for developing solutions to the challenges facing producers, establishing techniques and best practices that help advance the rice industry.

The strong partnership between education and industry is crucial to leveraging the investment made in rice research. This cooperation helps improve the rice crop and increase farmers' yields, as well as makes rice production more efficient.

This collaboration is also seen in conservation efforts. Rice farmers are leaders in sustainability. Over the last two decades, rice producers have been able to increase their yields by more than 50 percent, with improved quality, while reducing land use by 35 percent, energy use by 38 percent, and water use by 53 percent.

In addition to being good stewards of the environment, rice farmers provide

critical habitat for ducks and other waterfowl. Organizations like Ducks Unlimited have formed a relationship with rice farmers through the Rice Stewardship to improve conservation practices that help shape the habitat for waterfowl. Flooded rice fields have become great locations for hunters. When these outdoorsmen visit Arkansas to take advantage of our natural resources, they pump money into our local economies.

As a duck hunting destination, it is critically important that we protect waterfowl habitats in Arkansas so we can continue to attract sports men and women to our State.

Congress can help our rice farmers continue these good practices by passing a farm bill that includes our robust conservation title.

During my annual ag tour in Arkansas last month, I visited with rice farmers, researchers, and rice industry leaders. They shared with me how the farm bill can work better for them. We can improve crop insurance to make the policy work better for our rice farmers. They need a strong farm safety net, and they asked that Washington protect the markets they have and work to open new markets like trade with Cuba.

I am proud to craft and promote policies that help our rice farmers, and I will continue to be an advocate for the industry. This month is the perfect time to celebrate the rice industry and the many positive contributions it makes to Arkansas.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in the confirmation of any Supreme Court nominee, it is the Senate's job to carefully and thoroughly review the nominee's credentials, beliefs, background, and suitability for the position. Once confirmed, a Supreme Court Justice is not subject to review or to term limits. It is a lifetime appointment with immense responsibilities and powers. We have to examine any Supreme Court nominee in light of those facts.

Dr. Christina Blasey Ford has come forward with a credible allegation that Judge Kavanaugh is guilty of sexual misconduct. I believe her, but regardless of what you believe, she deserves to be heard in a deliberate and impartial manner, in a way that is dignified